DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 093 450 PS 007 092

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TITLE	Time Spent in N-V and N-V-A Sentence Structures in Family and Group Day Care Centers.
INSTITUTION	State Univ. of New York, Stony Brook. Dept. of Psychology.
PUB DATE	Dec 72
NOTE	11p.; For related documents, see PS 007 089-091
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Activities; *Day Care Services; *Preschool Children; Research; Research Problems; *Sentence Structure; *Verbal Communication; *Verbal Development
IDENTIFIERS	Family Day Care; Group Day Care

ABSTRACT

This paper, one in a series investigating day care services, is based on two assumptions concerning verbalizations of preschool children: (1) the complexity of verbalizations is more important than the quantity; and (2) the quality of care is directly related to the occurrence of the complexity of verbalizations. The higher the occurrence of complex verbalizations the more desirable the care. To distinguish between the quality of care given in family day care centers and group day care centers, two hypotheses are presented and tested which state that more complex verbalizations (N-V-A) will be produced in the family day care center and that the group day care center will produce more simple verbalizations (N-V) than complex. Ten randomly-chosen children between the ages of 28 and 54 months were used as subjects, and a total of 400 minutes of observation for all the children were taken by trained preschool teachers. Results confirmed the hypotheses, but significance levels were low due to some inherent problems in the procedures. These are discussed. (SDH)

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Time Spent in N-V and N-V-A Sentence Structures in Family and Group Day Care Centers

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December 1972

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There has been great debate over what types of verbal behavior are characteristic of quality care. Ira Gordon (1972) has pointed out that high intellective potential is readily observable by the volume of time peers spend talking to each other. If we accept this premise than we would state that a quality program would have a great deal of verbalizing between peers. Another facet of this argument is whether the volume of verbalizations is more important than the quality of verbalizations. Is complexity more important than sheer volume?

Two assumptions are being made in this study: (1) Complexity of verbalizations is more important than quantity of verbalizations; (2) the quality of care is directly related to the occurrence of the complexity of verbalizations. The higher the occurrence of complex verbalizations the more desireable the care.

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IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT TRENDS TOWARDS MORE VERBALIZING IN A FAMILY DAY CARE CENTER THAN IN A GROUP DAY CARE CENTER HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED (FIENE, 1972). HOWEVER, ONE ASPECT OF THE NATURE OF THIS VOLUME OF VERBALIZATIONS IS THE CHARACTER OF THESE VERBALIZATIONS. ARE THEY LONG OR SHORT SENTENCES? SHERE VOLUME ISN'T AS IMPORTANT AS THE COMPLEXITY OR SOPHISTICATION OF THESE SENTENCES. ARE THE SUBJECTS WITHIN THE FAMILY DAY CARE CENTERS PRODUCING JUST MORE SENTENCES OR ARE THEY PRODUCING MORE COMPLEX SENTENCES?

I AM PREDICTING THAT: (1) SS IN THE FAMILY DAY CARE CENTER WILL PRODUCE MORE COMPLEX VERBALIZATIONS; (2) SS IN THE GROUP DAY CARE CENTER WILL PRODUCE MORE SIMPLE VERBALIZATIONS THAN COMPLEX VERBALIZATIONS.

METHOD

SUBJECTS:

TEN S6, FIVE MALES AND FIVE FEMALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 2? AND 34 MONTHS. ALL WERE WHITE CHILDREN ATTENDING DAY CARE CENTERS FULL TIME (? HRS/DAY). THREE MALES AND TWO FEMALES WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED FROM A FAMILY DAY CARE CENTER. THE SAME WAS DONE IN A GROUP DAY CARE CENTER. THE GROUP AND FAMILY DAY CARE CENTERS WERE MATCHED FOR A TRADITIONAL NURSERY SETTINGS EMPHASIZING ESSENTIALLY CUSTODIAL CARE OF CHILDREN.

MATERIALS:

EACH OBSERVER HAD TWO STOP WATCHES TO RECORD THE TIME SPENT IN N-V AS VERSUS N-V-A SENTENCES OR VERBALIZATIONS.

SETTING:

THE TWO CENTERS WERE IN THE ISLIP TOWNSHIP LOCATED IN THE SOUTH-CENTRAL PORTION OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK. THESE WERE LOW TO MIDDLE INCOME AREAS.

IN BOTH CENTERS THERE WERE WELL-DEFINED ACTIVITY AREAS. THESE ACTIVITY AREAS WERE A COGNITIVE GAMES AREA, A BLOCKS AREA, AN ART AREA, A FREE PLAY AREA, AND A DRAMATIC PLAY AREA. ACTIVITY AREAS WERE DELINEATED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: BLOCKS AREA--AN AREA THAT CONTAINED ANY TYPE OF BUILDING TOYS (ERECTOR SETS, UNIT BLOCKS, HOLLOW BLOCKS); ART AREA--CONTAINED CRAYONS, COLORING BLOCKS, EASELS, COLLAGE MATERIALS (FELT, PAPER, SCISSORS); COGNITIVE GAMES AREA--CONTAINED PUZZLES, MANIPULATIVE SMALL MUSCLE TOYS; DRAMATIC PLAY AREA--CONTAINED DOLLS, CARRIAGES, DRESS-UP MATERIALS; FREE PLAY AREA--CONTAINED OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT AND LARGE MUSCLE EQUIPMENT. ACTIVITY AREAS WERE BROKEN OFF FROM EACH OTHER BY WAIST HIGH (ADULT HEIGHT SHELVES OR TOY CABINETS). IN BOTH CENTERS, ALL ACTIVITY AREAS WERE EMPHASIZED EQUALLY (I.E. CHILDREN SPENT AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF TIME IN ALL AREAS).

RECORDINGS:

THE VERBALIZATIONS WERE RECORDED AS EITHER N-V (NOUN-VERB OR SIMPLE VERBALIZATIONS) OR N-V-A (NOUN-VERB-ADVERB OR NOUN OR COMPLEX VERBALIZATIONS). THE STOP-WATCHES WOULD BE STARTED SIMULTANEOUSLY FOR THE OBSERVER. IF THE VERBALIZATIONS WERE A SIMPLE VERBALIZATIONS, THE OBSERVER WOULD STOP ONE STOP WATCH AT THE COMPLETION OF THE VERBALIZATION AND RECORD THE TIME VERBALIZING. IF THE VERBALIZATIONS WERE A COMPLEX VERBALIZATIONS, THE OBSERVER WOULD LET BOTH STOP-WATCHES RUN UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE VERBALIZATIONS, THEN RECORD THE TIME OF THE COMPLEX VERBALIZATION.

PROCEDURE:

THE OBSERVERS WHO DID THE RECORDINGS WERE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS. ONE MALE, ONE FEMALE. TRAINING OF OBSERVERS WAS DONE ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE TO THE ACTUALLY COLLECTING OF THE DATA FOR THE STUDY.

THE OBSERVERS WERE LOCATED ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE ROOM, THEY WERE FREE TO MOVE ALONG THE PERIPHERY OF THE

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CENTERS IN ORDER TO GET A BETTER VIEW OF THE CHILDREN AND TO HEAR THE CHILDREN BETTER FOR VERBALIZATIONS. THE OBSERVERS SPENT 20 MINUTES IN THE MORNING BETWEEN 10:00-10:30 IN THE CENTERS. THESE TIMES WERE SELECTED FOR THE STAFF INTERACTED WITH THE CHILDREN AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE DURING THIS TIME. THERE WAS NO LARGE GROUP PLAY, THE CHILDREN WERE ENGAGED IN SOLITARY PLAY OR GROUP PLAY WITHOUT ADULT INTERVENTION.

THE OBSERVERS WOULD SPEND THEIR 20 MINUTES OF EACH DAY AS FOLLOWS: THEY WOULD ENTER ONE OF THE CENTERS, SYNCHRONIZE THEIR STOP WATCHES SO THAT EACH OBSERVER STARTED OBSERVING AT PRECISELY THE SAME TIME. ONLY THE TIMINGS WERE KEPT ON EACH OF THE TEN Ss AS THEY VERBALIZED WITHIN THE CENTERS. FORTY MINUTES OF OBSERVATIONS WERE OBTAINED FOR EACH S. THERE WAS A TOTAL OF 400 MINUTES OF OBSERVATIONS FOR ALL Ss. THE OBSERVATIONS WERE DONE OVER A TWO WEEK PERIOD. FOUR TEN MINUTE SESSIONS WERE TAKEN ON EACH SUBJECT.

RELIABILITY WAS CALCULATED FOR THE TWO OBSERVERS FOR EACH TEN MINUTE OBSERVATION SESSION. RELIABILITY WAS CALCULATED BY THE OBSERVERS WHERE IF THEY WERE WITHIN 30 SECONDS OF EACH OTHER FOR THEIR TIMINGS

OBTAINED ON THEIR STOP-WATCHES, THE OBSERVATION WAS CONSIDERED VALID. THIS AVERAGED OUT TO A .95 RELIABILITY CHECK FOR EACH SESSION.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

AS CAN BE SEEN IN FIGURE 1, THE Ss WERE PRODUCING MORE N-V-A (COMPLEX SENTENCE STRUCTURES) IN THE FAMILY DAY CARE CENTERS ($t=1.96$, $p<.10$). IN THE GROUP DAY CARE CENTER (SEE FIGURE 2), THE Ss PRODUCED MORE N-V THAN N-V-A SENTENCE STRUCTURES ($t=2.01$, $p<.10$).

INSERT FIGURE 1

THERE WERE SOME INHERENT PROBLEMS WITH THIS STUDY WHICH PROBABLY CAUSED THE LOW SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS. THE MANNER OF RECORDING TIMES THROUGH THE USE OF THE STOP-WATCHES WAS DIFFICULT AND CUMBERSOME. TRYING TO COORDINATE

INSERT FIGURE 2

FIGURE 1

T-TESTS COMPUTED ON NUMBER OF VERBALIZATIONS PRODUCED BY S6 IN FAMILY DAY CARE CENTERS ON N-V AND N-V-A SENTENCE STRUCTURES

	NUMBER OF VERBALIZATIONS
N-V	1810
N-V-A	2026
T-TEST	1.96*

* $p < .10$

FIGURE 2

T-TESTS COMPUTED ON NUMBER OF VERBALIZATIONS PRODUCED BY SS IN GROUP DAY CARE CENTERS ON N-V AND N-V-A SENTENCE STRUCTURES

	NUMBER OF VERBALIZATIONS
N-V	1936
N-V-A	1577
T-TEST	2.01*

* $p < .10$

YOUR HANDS FOR SIMPLE AS VERSUS COMPLEX VERBALIZATIONS MADE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ON THE OBSERVERS. THE PROBLEM OF ANTICIPATION IN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHEN A CHILD WAS TALKING AND JUST MOVING HIS LIPS MADE FOR DIFFICULTIES IN OBSERVATIONS.

IN FUTURE STUDIES, I WOULD RECOMMEND COUNTING THE FREQUENCY THAT A VERBALIZATION OCCURRED RATHER THAN ITS DURATION. THIS WOULD PROVIDE A MORE VALID MEANS OF RECORDING.

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